Decomposers

In freshwater systems, especially slow moving areas like swamps and billabongs, buffalo also foul water making it unsafe for humans to drink. Reduced water quality and buffalo wallowing and trampling also reduces the abundance of freshwater flora and fauna including favoured bush tucker species water lilies, water chestnut, turtle and freshwater mussels.

As their name suggests, Water Buffalo don't roam far from water. Much of the damage they do is simply caused by shifting their large bodies around. Their wallowing gouges out swim channels across the floodplains, breaching barriers between seawater and freshwater systems and altering floodplain hydrology.

Water Buffalo push over saplings in rainforests, crush nests of waterbirds and spread weed seeds in their coats and dung. On top of this, they eat large amounts of herbage, particularly wetland grasses and sedges. Buffalo damage to floodplains and paperbark forests may contribute to declines in Magpie Goose and Estuarine Crocodile nesting activity.

Their numbers peaked at around 350,000 animals before an eradication campaign in the 1980's. Present estimates of the buffalo population are around 75,000 animals.

Water Buffalo were introduced to the Northern Territory from south-east Asia as a source of meat for early white settlers.

Buffalo